

Headline	Kedah book ticket to the quarter-finals		
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Kedah book ticket to the quarter-finals

THE Kedah Presidents Cup soccer team marched into the quarter-final in style by demolishing Selangor 5-0 in their last Group A match.

Prolific scorer Mohd Syafiq Ahmad scored a hat-trick in the home match at the Universiti Utara Malaysia mini stadium in Sintok, Kedah.

He scored the three goals in the 22nd, 26th and 28th minutes.

Goalkeeper Mohd Muhaimin converted a penalty in the 34th minute and Irwan Shazmin scored at the stroke of half-time to make it 5-0.

The win enabled Kedah to leapfrog over Negri Sembilan and pip Kelantan to take second place in the group.

Kedah now have 31 points, behind leaders KL Felda United who have 37 points.

Kelantan were in joint third place with Kedah on 28 points going into their final group matches.

They also enjoyed a victory to amass 31 points, defeating Negri Sembilan (who were in second spot with 30 points) 2-0 in Kota Baru.

But Kedah's 5-0 victory over Selangor enabled them to pip Kelantan for second place in the table on better goal difference.

Kedah had scored 31 goals and conceded 15 for a goal difference of 16 while Kelantan

had 33 goals to their credit but conceded 20 for an inferior goal difference of 13.

Kedah's opponents in the quarter-final knock-out stage will be Terengganu's T-Team.

That match will be played on Saturday at home in the first leg. The return leg will be on May 12.

In their match against Selangor, Kedah kicked off at a leisurely pace and almost paid the price when they conceded a first-minute corner kick unnecessarily.

Fortunately for Kedah, the corner kick was of no consequence.

Kedah went on the offensive after that.

They took full control of midfield and moved in unison towards the Selangor

goal but were constantly pushed back by a well-knit Selangor defence built around V. Theenesh, Mohd Ali Hanafiah and Mohd Afiq Huzair.

But it was not for long as Kedah came charging from both flanks to prise open the Selangor defence.

Mohd Syafiq, Ivaan Hakimi and Irwan Shazmin kept teasing the Selangor defence and finally had the breakthrough in the 22nd minute.

Osman Mohd Yusoff slipped a pass through the Selangor defence and Mohd Syafiq timed his run well to find himself free with only

goalkeeper Gafur Shamsuddin to beat.

Syafiq gave no chance for the Selangor custodian to save the ball.

The goal proved to be the tonic for Kedah who kept up a constant barrage of attacks.

In the 26th minute, Mohd Syafiq was again on target when he picked up a cross from Ivaan Hakimi from the left to calmly place the ball into the net from 5m.

Two minutes later, Mohd Syafiq completed his hat-trick with a headed goal.

Kedah continued to press forward in numbers and in the 34th minute, Selangor goalkeeper Gafur Shamsuddin tripped Mohd Syafiq inside the penalty area.

Referee Badrul Hisyam Ismail gave a penalty to Kedah and Mohd Muhaimin had the honour of making the score 4-0.

Kedah's fifth goal came when Irwan Shazmin went past a static Selangor defence to beat the outrushing Selangor custodian just before the half-time whistle.

Satisfied with the handsome lead, Kedah took it easy in the second half.

They kept the ball rolling from side to side and took pot shots occasionally with no intention to score.

Selangor, who were not in contention for a quarter-final slot, tried their best to get a consolation goal.

However, they were sadly too inadequate to trouble the Kedah defence.

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Quick and sharp: Kedah's Mohd Syafiq racing away after scoring his first goal against Selangor in the President's Cup group A soccer match.